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Proceedings at Boston, May 20th, 1868.

The Annual meeting of the American Oriental Society was held in Boston, on Wednesday, May 20th, at the usual hour and place. The President being absent, the chair was taken by Rev. Dr. R. Anderson, Vice-President. The day was very stormy, and the attendance of members unusually small.

The minutes of the preceding meeting (at New Haven, Oct. 1867) were read by the Recording Secretary and approved. Reports from the retiring officers were then called for.

The Treasurer's report was presented, in his absence, by the Recording Secretary. It showed the income and expenses of the year to have been as follows:

RECEIPTS.

Balance on hand, May 22d, 1867, - - - - -	\$1,049.76
Annual Assessments, - - - - -	\$ 75.00
Sale of the Journal, - - - - -	149.49
Interest on deposit in Savings Bank, - - - - -	107.88
Total receipts of the year, - - - - -	332.37
	<u>\$1,382.13</u>

EXPENDITURES.

Printing of Proceedings, etc., - - - - -	\$ 92.72
Expenses of Library and Correspondence, - - - - -	29.81
Total expenditures of the year, - - - - -	\$ 122.53
Balance on hand, May 20th, 1868, - - - - -	1,259.60
	<u>\$1,382.13</u>

The accounts, having been audited by a committee of two, appointed for that purpose, were accepted.

The Librarian presented a list of donors during the year to the Society's collections, and gave oral explanations of the character and value of the donations made. To the catalogue of the Library have been added 41 new titles, besides one manuscript title.

In behalf of the Committee of Publication, a report was made by the Corresponding Secretary. There has been no issue of the Journal during the past year, owing mainly to the lack of suitable material. Preparation of the edition of the *Tāittiriya-Prātiçākhyā* and its commentary, the *Tribhāshyaratna*, which work has been intended and expected to occupy a part of the next volume, has been delayed by unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances. The delay, however, was to turn out greatly for the advantage of the work, since new and very important manuscript material has been

recently secured. Besides a collation of the (imperfect) Oxford MS., obtained through the kind offices of Prof. Müller, a copy and collation of two other manuscripts, recently discovered in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, has been secured. Information of these was sent to Prof. Whitney by Dr. R. Rost, Secretary of the Roy. As. Soc., last autumn; and the copy and collation has been made, with his kind coöperation and aid, by Dr. Julius Eggeling, a German scholar now residing in England, to whose generous and friendly devotion the work will be greatly indebted for its completeness. The manuscripts referred to have been for many years in the possession of the London Society, but, being written in the southern Indian characters (one in Malayalam, the other, on strips of palm leaf, in Grantha), they have until now escaped identification and notice. Their assistance will render it possible to furnish a satisfactory text of the commentary, which it is accordingly proposed to add in full to the treatise and notes. There is no reason to believe that a half-volume will not be ready for delivery to the members by the next annual meeting, and the other half-volume in the course of 1869.

The Board of Directors announced that the autumn meeting would be held in New Haven, October 14th, and that Mr. Cotheal of New York, with the Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, would act as a Committee of Arrangements for it.

They also gave notice that they had appointed Prof. Salisbury and Rev. Dr. Clark to aid the Corresponding Secretary in endeavoring to secure a more extended and active participation of American Missionaries in the work of the Society; and had committed the lists of members for revision to Professors Salisbury, Hadley, and Whitney, with directions to report at the next annual meeting.

Two gentlemen, recommended by the Board for election to membership, were balloted upon, and duly elected, namely :

as Corporate Member,

Prof. John B. Feuling, Madison, Wisc.

as Corresponding Member,

Rev. Charles H. H. Wright, of Dresden.

The Corresponding Secretary called the attention of the meeting to the unusual loss it had suffered during the past year in the death of four of its Honorary Members—namely, Prof. F. Bopp of Berlin, the Duc de Luynes and M. Reinaud of Paris, and Râja Râdhâkânta Deva of Calcutta. He gave a brief statement of the claims of each of these gentlemen to the respectful and grateful remembrance of Orientalists, entering into more detail respecting the brilliant achievements of Bopp in the department of comparative philology.

Notice was also taken of the death of Prof. C. C. Jewett of Boston, a Corporate Member, Prof. Peabody of Cambridge giving some account of his life and literary labors.

Messrs. Ropes of Boston, Sanborn of Springfield, and Brigham of Taunton, were appointed a Nominating Committee to propose a board of officers for the next year. They presented the following ticket (the same with last year's), which was elected without dissent :

<i>President</i>	—Pres. T. D. WOOLSEY, D.D., LL.D.,	of New Haven.
<i>Vice-Presidents</i>	{ Rev. RUFUS ANDERSON, D.D.,	“ Boston.
	{ Hon. PETER PARKER, M.D.,	“ Washington.
	{ Prof. EDWARD E. SALISBURY,	“ New Haven.
<i>Corresp. Secretary</i>	—Prof. W. D. WHITNEY, Ph.D.,	“ New Haven.
<i>Secr. of Classical Section</i>	—Prof. JAMES HADLEY,	“ New Haven.
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	—Mr. EZRA ABBOT,	“ Cambridge.
<i>Treasurer</i>	—Prof. D. C. GILMAN,	“ New Haven.
<i>Librarian</i>	—Prof. W. D. WHITNEY,	“ New Haven.
<i>Directors</i>	{ Mr. A. I. COTHEAL,	“ New York.
	{ Prof. W. W. GOODWIN, Ph.D.,	“ Cambridge.
	{ Prof. W. H. GREEN, D.D.,	“ Princeton.
	{ Prof. J. J. OWEN, D.D.,	“ New York.
	{ Prof. A. P. PEABODY, D.D.,	“ Cambridge.
	{ Dr. CHARLES PICKERING,	“ Boston.
	{ Prof. JOHN PROUDFIT, D.D.,	“ New York.

A few extracts were read from letters received since the last meeting. Among them was the following, from Mr. John P. Brown of Constantinople, dated Jan. 24, 1868:

“I see in Trübner's catalogue that my little work on “The Dervishes” is out and for sale, although I have not yet received a copy of it. I have just had printed, also, in London, a small work, called “Ancient and Modern Constantinople,” which will soon be for sale. I shall try and send you a copy of each. During the spring and summer months I have been absent, and have done but little in the literary line. I am collecting materials for a “Life and Times of A'li, the 4th Caliph,” which I hope sometime to publish. This will have a religious rather than a historical character—or rather, will partake of both.

“Dr. Paspati is employed on a large work on ‘the Gypsies and their Language, with their Tales and Ballads.’ This will interest you, as the roots of their language are Sanskritic. The secret religion of the Gypsies would be of much interest, and may be found in their tales and ballads; but, as yet, no one has taken it up. Dr. Mordtmann of this city has promised to do so, but has not as yet accomplished anything, so far as I am aware.”

Only one communication was presented at this meeting, namely On Bell's “Visible Speech,” by Prof. W. D. Whitney, of New Haven.

The work in which this new system of phonetic writing is laid before the public is entitled “Visible Speech: the Science of Universal Alphabetics; or, Self-interpreting Physiological Letters, for the writing of all Languages in one Alphabet. Illustrated by Tables, Diagrams, and Examples. By Alex. Melville Bell, etc. etc. Inaugural Edition. London, 1867.” (4to, pp. 126.) It begins with an account of the circumstances attending the origination and development of the system, of the attempt made by its author to get it taken up and propagated through the community by the British Government, and the failure of this attempt, of the tests through which it had triumphantly passed, and of the testimony given in its favor by practiced phonetists like Mr. A. J. Ellis. The system is one which cuts loose from all alphabets in present use, and sets up a new scheme of signs, of

which every element is intended to be directly symbolic of a physical act, so that each letter represents the whole method of production of the sound it stands for, and is, after the symbolism is learned, self-interpreting. Not only articulate sounds, but almost all audible utterances of which human organs are capable, are claimed to be representable by it: it aims at, and fairly accomplishes, more than any other system ever invented. Prof. Whitney gave an account of the contents of the work, and an analysis and criticism of its signs for sounds. He showed that, while these are exceedingly ingenious, and in the main sufficiently exact, they nevertheless are far from being entitled to all the credit claimed for them. Even in the consonantal part of the alphabet, Mr. Bell's analysis of not a few sounds is faulty, and his designation false; for example, in *s*, *z*, *th*, he either introduces symbols of unreal acts, or omits to symbolize other real acts of articulation, or both. With his treatment of the far more difficult matter of vowel utterance much more fault was found: his whole scheme of classification and description of the vowels was rejected, as being a step backward rather than forward, when compared with the labors of his predecessors. On the whole, it was asserted that Mr. Bell has not in a single point sensibly advanced the science of alphabetics, although he has shown superior skill in the art of alphabetic notation. He is disposed also to overrate the value and usefulness of his invention, imagining that it is going to do away with the difficulties of learning to read, of learning to pronounce a foreign language, of analysing and representing the sounds of unwritten tongues, and the like. Whereas, a scheme of alphabetic symbols is like a scheme of chemical symbols, or a nomenclature in any branch of science; a good nomenclature efficiently facilitates the mastery of a science, as a bad one throws obstacles in the way of it; but the nomenclature is of secondary consequence, and to acquire it is not to master the science. It is to phonetists that Mr. Bell's system must be chiefly valuable, and there seems no good reason why the task of spreading the knowledge and use of it should have been assumed by Government.

The construction of the volume presenting the system was criticized as being far too obscure and difficult. By first giving the physical descriptions of sounds complete, and putting off all illustration to another part of the work, the author has doubtless repelled many who might otherwise have learned to understand and favor the new alphabet.

After some discussion of the subject of this communication, the Society adjourned.